



“A Study of The Big Dish: Planning & Executing a Successful Fundraising Event”

By: Kelsey Ring

This paper was written with great support from the following people:

Dr. Margaret Binkley
Assistant Professor in the Consumer Sciences, Thesis Advisor

Betty Kaye
Consumer Science Lecturer, Thesis Advisor

Erica Mitchell
Consumer Sciences Foodservice Lab Coordinator, Big Dish Committee Supervisor

The Big Dish Planning Committee:
Mia Davis, Director of Operations
Haley Moore, Director of Public Relations
Brittany Mullet, Director of Sponsorships & Fundraising
Jill Renda, Hospitality Management Association President

The Hospitality Management Program Advisory Board and various other Hospitality Program
associates who dedicated large amounts of time and effort to The Big Dish event

Table of Contents

Abstract	5
The Big Dish	5
Introduction	8
Literature Review	9
Setting Goals for Success & Measurements	9
Planning Process of an Event	10
Integrating All Processes	10
Relationship Marketing	11
Direct Marketing	12
Marketing through Social Media	13
Research Components	13
Research Question	13
Hypothesis	14
Additional Information	15
Data Collection	15
Survey 1	19
Survey 2	19
Evaluating the Event Long-Term	20
Results	21
Conclusion	25
References	29
Appendix A – Survey 1	30
Appendix B – Survey 2	32
Industry Professional Survey	32

Student Survey	33
Appendix C – General Results.....	37
Appendix D – First Survey Results	39
Appendix E – Second Survey Results	41
Industry Professional Survey	41
Student Survey	43
Appendix F – Event Timeline.....	48
Appendix G – Suggested Committee Breakdown	51
Appendix H – Issues in Event Planning and Execution	53
Communication.....	53
Requesting Donations	56
Guest List & Registration	58
Other Concerns & Suggestions.....	61
References.....	64

Abstract

The Big Dish event, which will serve as the Hospitality Management Program's fundraiser for initiatives, a networking event for seniors and a showcase of the program, will be a replacement of the former Rising Stars event. In the endeavor to create a thriving annual event, it is important to address the question, "What will it take to make a fundraising event like The Big Dish successful?" The success will be based largely on the quantitative and qualitative measures derived from the events goals. All information has been compiled with the overarching goal of beginning a handbook for The Big Dish planning committee and turning the committee into a semester course designed specifically for talented students wishing to pursue a career in event planning.

The Big Dish

The Big Dish is designed to serve as the new annual fundraising and networking event for the Hospitality Management Program at The Ohio State University. The event, which is designed to be student-run, was developed based on ideas from the Hospitality Management course in Special Events Management. The Big Dish, which replaced the former Rising Stars, is taking on a new dimension in not only being a learning experience for students in how to plan a successful event, but also serves as a "brainstorming" event for future concepts. The initial committee, made up of five undergraduate students with support from the Hospitality Management Program Advisory Board, had the goal of turning this experience in event planning into a semester course. This course will allow students to gain hands-on experience while fulfilling program requirements.

The Big Dish is designed to raise funds for several new initiatives in the hospitality program. They are as follows:

1. *Virtual Classroom*: The classroom would be used as a real-world application classroom in which students would learn to use various hotel and restaurant systems such as POS's, reservations, and food cost and planning systems.
2. *Creative Learning Space*: The creative learning space would serve as an extension of the virtual classroom and would be developed to promote group work and other alternative teaching methods.
3. *Faculty Endowment*: Funding for an additional faculty member with real-world experience to support program growth.
4. *Study Abroad Scholarships*: A fund for hospitality students wishing to participate in Study Abroad opportunities, such as the spring 2013 trip to Thailand. The trip to Thailand, which will include a small group of Hospitality Management and Fashion and Retail students, is focused on tourism and studying the student-run hotel and restaurant at one of Thailand's leading International Colleges.
5. *Lecture Series*: The lecture series which has been in place for the past several years serves as a once per semester event to connect students with industry professionals. A speaker is selected each semester to discuss their experiences in the hospitality industry and to offer advice to current students. Past lecture series participants have included Chef Richard Rosendale, certified Master Chef and recent winner of the Bocuse d'Or competition and Chris Doody, creator of Bravo and Brio and current owner of Piada Italian Street Food.

Some funds will also be set aside as a budget for next year's event.

The Big Dish Committee has also developed a set of short- and long-term goals for the event. These goals were developed to help direct the committee on planning a successful event and to be used as a guideline for measuring success.

Short-term Goals

1. Branding the Event
2. Awareness of the Program (among Hospitality Professionals)
3. Fundraising for Initiatives

This year the committee established that the focus of the event should not completely fall to generating the largest amount of funds, but more on branding the event. The price for the tickets and sponsorships were set with the idea that amounts could increase as the event gained recognition. With the creation of a logo, the event has become completely unique and new. The committee is hoping to build brand equity for the event and increase the presence of The Ohio State University Hospitality Management Program within the professional industry.

Long-term Goals

1. Establishing a Donor Base for the Hospitality Management Program
2. Beginning Initiatives and Creating Others that can be Funded through the Event
3. Development of a Class to Make the Event Entirely Student-Run

The Big Dish is being developed as an annual event of the Hospitality Management program. Currently the program receives great support through the Hospitality Management Advisory Board, but there is not a large donor base to support initiatives. By creating a donor base, more initiatives can be established and the program can grow to be one of the most prestigious programs in the country. The event is also designed to be completely student-run, but since this was the inaugural event, the student committee relied heavily on the support of the Hospitality

Management Advisory Board and the Hospitality Management program's faculty and staff. As the event continues it will transition to all aspects being completely student-run and also serve as an elective course for top-tier students in the Hospitality Management program wishing to pursue event planning as a future position in the industry.

The Big Dish will not only involve students who serve on the committee and the Special Events Planning class, but will also be a chance for other students in the program to assist in making the event a success. The Principles of Food Management and Introduction to Employee Training in Foodservice Operations classes will also have a large part in the event. These students will serve as the event set-up crew, servers and assistants to the chefs on the day of the event. There may also be further opportunities for students depending on the needs of the event. Furthermore, students who have a strong interest in the culinary side of hospitality, but who are not enrolled in one of these classes can still volunteer to work with local chefs to prepare food for the event.

Introduction

In order to ensure that The Big Dish is successful, it is imperative the committee attempts to emulate other successful fundraising events. Because of this, it is important to study successful event planning techniques as well as examine current events that take place in and around the Columbus, Ohio area. Since this will be the inaugural year of The Big Dish, it is also necessary to evaluate the event using both qualitative and quantitative procedures.

Measurements will be derived from several methods including surveys, general observations, number of attendees at the event and money raised. The handbook for the event will then be

developed to include the observations and evaluations, along with suggestions for upcoming years.

Literature Review

Setting Goals for Success & Measurements

Setting goals is an important first step in any event planning process. John S. Wilson, the director of Library Advancement and Special Projects at the Baylor Universities Library, wrote an article titled “Special events: Defining goals, planning and measuring success.” In the article he discusses the importance of goal setting in event management and in measuring success.

Looking at it from the point of view of a library development officer, Wilson presents several ideas on the types of goals needed, how to set these goals, and why these goals are important for the overall success of the event. Using examples of library events, he still illustrates these points as being important in all events, specifically for those which serve as fundraisers (Wilson, 2004).

Wilson points out how events should begin with creating both short and long-term goals which should reflect the overall mission of the organization. Even events that have a goal of fundraising should look to create additional goals that span a range of aims. These goals which can be carefully expanded, defined and planned for, then become the basis for the evaluation of the success of the event. Wilson also discusses how success of an event should be both a quantitative measure, such as amount of funds raised and number of attendees as well as qualitative measures such as general attendee response to the event and excitement for the next year (Wilson, 2004).

Using the suggestions of Wilson, The Big Dish committee has developed a set of goals as a way to both measure and promote success. The use of qualitative and quantitative measures of success will be employed and the goals will serve as the basis for measures of success. Even

with the goals there is bound to be more to creating a successful event than just setting and properly executing goals. Wilson only addresses goal setting and execution, but for a successful event, there also needs to be a marketing campaign.

Planning Process of an Event

When planning an event it is always best to start with the basics. In “Event Planning as a Function in the Hospitality Industry” (Ivanovic, Galičić, & Mikinac, 2010) the authors discuss the process of planning an event in the simplest form. They suggest the core planning is concerned with the end results and the process to reach these results. They also stated that to determine the success of the event, it should be evaluated based on a range of plans and activities that were part of the overall planning process. The authors also discuss some of the pitfalls of event planning including over-planning, not updating event plans, and seeing plans as absolute and not directive (Ivanovic, Galičić, & Mikinac, 2010). These points are often unrecognized, but important to consider in event planning.

Overall, their research is very basic, and although it lends good points, it is very brief in details. They do not discuss any of the marketing or external work that goes into planning almost all events, but focus only on the very basics of making plans, which is not always enough to make events successful.

Integrating All Processes

In Thomas Stevick’s article “Integrating Development, Alumni Relations, and Marketing for Fundraising Success” the discussion centers on how universities can integrate several departments in order to increase fundraising to the University. The concept requires several steps along with the help of employees in all departments including development, alumni

relations, and marketing and communications. If integrated properly, this technique can increase the fundraising of the entire University or the organization it is being applied to (Stevick, 2010).

The article also touches briefly on relationship marketing and increasing alumni commitments and ties to the University in order to grow donations (Stevick, 2010). Although The Big Dish only involves one program at the university and is not concentrated on pulling donations and attendees from only alumni, it can benefit from integrating different components. By integrating The Big Dish as a full class component in the program and connecting the event as a college-wide experience, The Big Dish may be able to benefit from integration fundraising.

Relationship Marketing

Since, The Big Dish is expected to rely heavily on relationship marketing, it is important that this tactic is discussed. In “The Identity Salience Model of Relationship Marketing Success: The Case of Nonprofit Marketing,” Dennis Arnett, Steve German and Shelby Hunt discuss the importance of long-term relationships in all types of businesses and social exchanges and how identity salience is an important component of this relationship style marketing. The authors suggest that although relationship marketing is typically used in more formal business settings it can just as easily be applied to settings such as nonprofit firms and other settings. Examining this relationship marketing, the authors study a case of nonprofit higher education fundraising. In this study they found that a strong salience to the university is often a contributing factor to alumni donating money (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003).

The article also discusses how nonprofit organizations, although they do not always provide economic benefits for donations received, they do provide other benefits such as feeling good and pride. These noneconomic benefits and feelings are often increased when a person has strong feelings of salience toward the firm to which they are donating. Therefore, it is in the best

interest of the firm to create more opportunities for salient feelings to develop. The authors also address how many nonprofit firms are moving towards relationship marketing in order to maintain strong ties with individual donors (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003).

Considering the main points of the article, The Big Dish would be well served to employ the suggestion of relationship marketing and creating salient feelings as part of the overall marketing strategy. However, since The Big Dish has a target market of hospitality professionals who often are transient in their job, relationship marketing will not be as beneficial as the only marketing plan. Based on the research, relationship marketing should be only one component used as part of the overall marketing goal.

Direct Marketing

Most new events incorporate direct marketing as a form of advertisement for the occasion. James Peltier, a Professor of Marketing at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, wrote “The Direct Marketing of Charitable Causes: A Study of U.S. Fundraisers.” The article illustrates a study that was performed to determine the direct marketing tactics often employed in fundraising organizations. It also examined the interrelationships between these marketing tactics and responders. Additionally, the article serves as a comparison guide of tactics that organizations can use to evaluate their own direct marketing (Peltier, 1995).

This research, completed using surveys to U.S. fundraising organizations, found that direct marketing is a vital component of successful marketing strategies and direct mail is often the most prevalent tactic used (Peltier, 1995). For The Big Dish event direct mail will be a tactic heavily used to market the event. However, since the event is small enough that face-to-face requests can also be made, it is expected that this form of direct marketing will provide a greater success rate for attracting donors.

Marketing through Social Media

In today's technologically driven world, social networking has become a large source for promotion of special events. In the article by Cody Paris, Woojin Lee, and Paul Seery titled "The Role of Social Media in Promoting Special Events: Acceptance of Facebook 'Events'" they discuss the role of using Facebook for promoting events and the legitimacy of these social media sites. The study found that users' trust and expected relationship has a large influence in establishing the legitimacy of the event and deciding whether or not to attend. The study was conducted using an online survey of individuals who were invited to certain Facebook events in Phoenix, Arizona (Paris, Lee, & Seery, 2010).

The article also discusses how the use of social media sites are one way to increase the use of word-of-mouth advertising, as they can reach a large number of people at one time. The results of the study also indicate that Facebook events should be as entertaining and straightforward as possible, in order to increase effectiveness (Paris, Lee, & Seery, 2010). Although, social media will be implemented as a way to market The Big Dish to possible attendees, it is expected that this method may only be effective with the student population. It is also anticipated that the results of the most effective marketing tool will include a mix of print and social avenues, with the print advertising having a greater influence on industry professionals.

Research Components

Research Question

"What will it take to make a fundraising event like The Big Dish successful?"

Hypothesis

The Big Dish will need many elements to be successful. The most important elements will come through networking with industry professionals who are willing to support the event through donations, sponsorships and the purchase of tickets. Therefore, the success of the event will really be evaluated on the quantitative measures of number of attendees, the amount of money that is raised and other survey questions, as well as qualitative measures of success based on the level of excitement and the positive and negative feedback that is displayed through event surveys. Additionally, observations by the committee concerning the planning process will be calculated into the overall evaluation of the event.

The independent variable will be the support, in dollar amounts, that is provided through the industry professionals. This support will come in several forms including donations, such as in-kind items as food, drinks, silent auction items, valet services or other event needs. Support will also come in the form of buying tickets and sponsorships. The dependent variable is the success of The Big Dish. Success will be measured in both quantitative and qualitative forms and the details will be discussed below.

In order to network and gain support from industry professionals and to ensure the event is successful, several marketing strategies will be employed. These range from direct marketing through print media and emailing possible attendees and donators, social marketing through Facebook, and looking to strengthen already established connections through employing relationship marketing. In this way, success of the event depends on support from industry professionals, but the success of gaining support from industry professionals is reliant on marketing the event.

Additional Information

The unit of analysis and the population of interest are all attendees of The Big Dish. The attendees and therefore the population will be of varying demographics. Since the number of attendees is expected to be approximately three hundred people, is not necessary to develop a sample as the population is small enough that all event attendees can be part of the sample, making the study a census.

The evaluation of the event at the present time will be cross-sectional as there is only one event. Although the two surveys to event attendees will be given at slightly different times, with a few days in between, there will not be any expected occurrences that will change the respondents' answers to the two different surveys. As the event continues over the next few years, it is intended that the surveys and other methods of measure will be used to evaluate the event each time and it will become a longitudinal study in years to come.

Data Collection

In order to evaluate the event's success, the qualitative and quantitative measure mentioned above will be used. The quantitative measures of number of attendees and money raised can be easily calculated following the event's completion. For number of attendees, it will be broken down by what type of attendee they are: students, Ohio State faculty/staff member or industry professional. This will be further broken down into those paying and those who are nonpaying attendees. This break-down will allow for a better illustration to determine which category most of our attendees belong to. The category a person falls into will be determined from the ticket sales information. Since, the attendee must include which group they belong to when buying the ticket or when they RSVP (e.g. student, faculty/staff, or industry professionals);

it can then be easily recorded on the guest list. The information on how and even if they paid will also be recorded on the guest list. From that list each of the categories can be compiled in with the appropriate number of attendees. An example of the chart is below:

Big Dish Attendees

	Students	Faculty/Staff	Industry Professionals	Total
Paying Attendees				
Nonpaying Attendees				
Total				

It is important to note those industry professionals who do not pay for the event directly, but receive tickets through the purchase of a sponsorship or donation will still be marked as paying attendees. The purchase of a sponsorship includes eight industry professional tickets to use. The goal set for the overall number of attendees, excluding the consideration of categories is three hundred people.

The money raised will also be calculated and broken down in several ways. An example chart is shown below.

	Number Sold	Amount Generated
Individual Student Ticket Sales (\$15 each)		
Individual Faculty/Staff Ticket Sales (\$25 each)		
Individual Industry Professional Ticket Sales (\$75 each)		
Total in Individual Tickets		
Silver Sponsorship (\$1,000)		

Gold Sponsorship (\$1,250)		
Platinum Sponsorship (1,500)		
Total in Sponsorships		
Plates		
Raffle Items		
Total in Sold Items		
Total Revenue		
Total Costs		
Starting Budget		
Total Ending Funds		

The original goal of the event was to raise \$15,750 before deductions of costs. The breakdown for that goal is as follows.

	Goal of Number Sold	Goal of Amount Generated
Individual Student Ticket Sales (\$15 each)	50	\$750
Individual Faculty/Staff Ticket Sales (\$25 each)	10	\$250
Individual Industry Professional Ticket Sales (\$75 each)	40	\$3,000
Total in Individual Tickets		\$4,000
Silver Sponsorship (\$1,000)	2	\$2,000
Gold Sponsorship (\$1,250)	4	\$5,000
Platinum Sponsorship (1,500)	3	\$4,500

Total in Sponsorships		\$11,500
Plates	10-15	\$250
Raffle Items	0	0
Total in Sold Items		\$250

The starting budget for the event was \$5,000.

The surveys are created to be both qualitative and quantitative in their measurements. Additionally, the qualitative measure of general observations will be used to evaluate the event. The general observations are being gathered both during the planning process of the event and during the actual event. Since each planning meeting is carefully documented with notes concerning what is discussed, these will serve as field notes for the planning process. During The Big Dish, careful observations will be made and all ideas and suggestions from committee members will be compiled during the event follow-up meeting. These observations will then be used to help create things such as the event timeline, checklist, committee breakdown and suggestions for future years.

There will be two different surveys and each is discussed below. Since all of the questions are designed around evaluating the event, all respondents should be competent and the issues of avoiding socially desirable answers and sensitivity of subject matters will not be a concern. Permission to use the surveys was received from the Institutional Review Board at The Ohio State University.

Both surveys were developed by the researcher with input and approval by the committee. Questions were written to be both closed-ended as to collect certain information and open-ended to encourage any range of responses. Although there was not an opportunity for pre-testing before this event, the questions were carefully planned with input from numerous

individuals assisting the committee. For future events, these surveys should be considered the basis, but should be changed and edited accordingly.

Survey 1

The first survey will be available to complete at the end of the event. All questions will be close-ended except for the final open-ended question of asking for any general comments or suggestions. Since the survey is self-administered providing an incentive will be important. The incentive will come from the in-kind donations that will be requested. After receiving the in-kind donations the incentive that was chosen was an overnight stay at The Hilton Easton and a Brio gift basket. The Brio Bravo gift basket included a Chef Dinner for up to 4 people at either Bravo Bethel or Brio Easton with a value of \$200. In addition to the Chef's Dinner, the basket also included BBRG Logo items such as a reusable cup with lid & straw, playing cards, keychain with flashlight and gum. The prize was awarded by drawing a winner from all entrants. Survey participants were able to enter by filling out and tearing off the bottom portion of the survey (see Appendix A). The winner was then contacted via phone and it was announced on the Hospitality Management Program Facebook page.

Also, since all respondents will be in one central location (at the event) the survey can be announced and encouraged at an appropriate time, such as at the end of the event program. The questions were developed to gather very general information from the event. Appendix A shows an example of the survey that will be printed and placed at each seat at the event.

Survey 2

A follow-up survey will be given to all attendees within the week after the event. The survey, which will be sent via email using the third-party survey site Survey Monkey, will gather more in-depth information from attendees. It is expected that the response rate on this survey

will be a great deal smaller, but the information provided by any attendees will be useful. The survey again will be self-administered, but there will not be an incentive offered or the chance for face-to-face encouragement to complete it. There are two versions of the survey, one sent to student attendees, and one sent to industry professionals. The first survey in Appendix B is written for those attendees who are industry professionals. The survey emailed to students is slightly modified (i.e. the sponsorship section will be left out and a section about the Networking Workshop that will take place before the event will be added in) and is included as the second survey in Appendix B.

This survey has a greater mix of open- and close-ended questions with most of the open-ended questions contingent on the respondent answering a specific way to the close ended question. This survey also has several questions that may be skipped entirely by respondents based on their participation at the event (i.e. did they purchase a sponsorship or bid on any silent auction items). The questions were chosen to give a broader overall evaluation of the event from the moment they received the invitation to the time they leave the event. There was a careful balance in gathering an accurate amount of information without making the survey so long respondents are unwilling to complete it.

Evaluating the Event Long-Term

Since The Big Dish is intended to be a re-occurring event, it is essential that a long-term system of evaluation of the event is developed. It is suggested that all of the above mentioned methods of qualitative and quantitative measurements are used to evaluate the event each year. After the second year, comparisons can be made on the progress of the event in reaching the long-term goals and evaluations can be made on success in reaching the short-term goals. From

these comparisons and evaluations the goals for the following year can be re-evaluated and adjusted based on the findings.

An example of this could be that next year many things that were handled by the Hospitality Management Advisory Board become assignments for the students. This change would reflect the goal of making the event completely student run. In this instance it might be helpful to set short-term goals for the following year looking at what other assignments could be given to students to reach the long-term goal of the event being entirely student-run. It will be the responsibility of the committee next year to do all the evaluations and change the event goals and outline to reflect their findings.

Results

At the conclusion of The Big Dish it was quite evident it had indeed been very successful, in the goals of branding the event, raising awareness of the program and even in fundraising. The results of the surveys and general observations concluded that almost all attendees would attend this event or a similar event in subsequent years. In fact, 96% answered that they were indeed likely to attend next year (Appendix D).

Overall, the largest number of attendees was Industry Professionals, with 196 out of 289 falling in this category. This large number of professionals contributes positively to the goal mentioned above of raising awareness of the program. With reaching such a large number, the Hospitality Management Program can begin to grow and gain positive recognition in the Columbus area. Comparatively 77 out of 289 were students and 16 were faculty or staff of the Hospitality Management program. For a full breakdown of the number of attendees and corresponding paying or nonpaying categories please refer to Appendix C.

Appendix C, also displays the total revenue generated (\$21,545) and the total ending funds (\$15,065) after starting budget and costs. The original goal for the event was to raise \$15,750 before costs. In the end, that goal was exceeded by almost \$5,000. Even costs were lower than expected and an ending profit of \$15,065 gives a great starting budget for the next event and plenty to put towards the five initiatives.

Besides displaying the overwhelming positive feedback that 96% of guests would return to the event again next year, as mentioned above, Appendix D also displays other optimistic results for The Big Dish. Guests were asked to rate the event on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being exceptional or completely agree and 1 being disappointing or not at all. All four questions had a mean of 4.6 or above. The overall satisfaction score was a 4.63.

Appendixes F through H also include suggestions and guidelines for future events gathered from the surveys and general observations. A basic timeline for when items should be completed is included in Appendix F. Although, it was written for The Big Dish, it is not an all-inclusive list for the event. The reason for this being that many items depend on the decisions previously made. For example, it would be inappropriate to add “mail out tickets” to the checklist if no paper tickets are going to be mailed.

A suggested break-down for the committee and their assigned tasks are included in Appendix G. The breakdown was developed based on the experiences and general set-up of the first event. Currently, it breaks the committee down into five segments. These segments are Fundraising, Food and Beverage, Public Relations and Advertisement, Event Set-up and Décor, and Presentation and Program Display. Although it is not recommended that committees should have less than five people, if needed some tasks can be combined. More than five people would

be beneficial as it would allow for actual committees to be formed and the work load to be divided among committee members.

The final appendix, Appendix H addresses a few of the major concerns or issues with The Big Dish, both in the planning and execution process of the event. The three major concerns include communication, requesting donations and the guest list and registration and were drawn from the survey results and observations. These three major concerns can and often are concerns of many large events and although many of the suggestions were broad and could be applied in various situations, a few more specific suggestions to The Big Dish were also included. There are also eight smaller concerns, such as the lobby being too crowded, that illustrate more specific concerns of the event. Possible solutions and suggestions are also discussed. The issues highlighted come from a variety of sources including general observations and the administered surveys. The given solutions are also from varied sources and include suggestions from professional writings and websites. These professional writings were drawn from online event planning sites and other article databases such as the Chron, a news site which includes a section dedicated to writings about small businesses. All additional suggestions come from the committee and post-event discussions and meetings concerning The Big Dish.

In answering the question of what makes a fundraising event like The Big Dish successful, a few conclusions were drawn. Networking as predicted was considered a large part of making the event a success. In the surveys it was found that a portion of attendees (39%) heard about the event from a friend or colleague (See Appendix E). During the planning of the event networking was also very important for gaining interest from businesses for donations and sponsorships. Often, it was easier to gain a response from a potential sponsor when personal connections could be linked or recommendations from others could be obtained.

The hypothesis of marketing being essential to the success of the event also turned out to be true. Since this was the inaugural event, marketing was the main avenue for attracting guests besides networking. In marketing the event, we could inform possible attendees of the purpose and encourage them to spread the news. Marketing was done through a variety of means including e-mail, Facebook, posters and mailings.

One large factor in making the event successful that we did not predict was the necessity of donations. As mentioned above, networking was essential in gaining donations, but it was not considered prior to the event how these donations would be a large factor in the event's success. Results showed that donations were in fact one of the most important factors in making the event a success. The starting budget was only \$5,000 and although the event did make enough of a profit to cover the \$11,480 costs, these costs would have been much higher without donations from many sources. Additionally, the revenue accrued from the event included money collected from the auction which was completely donation based and from sponsorships which were considered a donation.

Yet, the greatest results from the research on this event were the suggestions and comments that can be applied to future events. This research gives invaluable advice to future event planning committees to make The Big Dish a successful reoccurring event! Appendixes D and E, which display the results from all of the surveys, include all the suggestions from the attendees. Suggestions and comments touched on many items from the event space to the food to the length of the event. Although not all comments can be applied since some were even contradictory, they should be considered during the planning process. All of these materials served as the beginning of the workbook for the class which will eventually be created to help plan this event.

Conclusion

The Big Dish has been developed to become an important component for the Hospitality Management Program, as a learning experience for students, a networking event, fundraiser, and showcase for the program. The goals of the event were developed in order to boost the program and work to make it one of the top programs at The Ohio State University. The aim of this research was to confirm that all goals align in a way to make this happen. Since The Big Dish is expected to continue for years to come, the results of the study will help the event to grow and prosper.

With it being the inaugural year the committee learned a lot about what worked well and what did not. But from an overall standpoint, it was a very successful and productive event. A few of the most positive highlights include the timing of the event being advantageous for networking and enjoying the dinner stations, the goal of fundraising being surpassed, and the decorations being simple yet elegant. The plate auction was also a huge hit and generated a lot more revenue than expected.

On the other side of things there were also several things that did not go over very well. This list includes the raffle. Although the plate auction was very successful, the raffle on the other hand was not. It really was due to a mix of poor marketing and general lack of knowledge of how, when and where to buy tickets to enter. It had potential to be a great revenue generator for the event, but really did not end up accomplishing that goal.

The use of space in the 4-H Center was also not maximized to the full potential. Although we reserved a large amount of space for the event including the entire entry/hallway space, several smaller classroom spaces and a ballroom, a majority of The Big Dish was spent in the entry/hallway space. Not only did this make much of the event seem crowded, but it also

gave little time for guests to enjoy the ballroom where most of the decorating had been focused. Furthermore, to complicate the use of the ballroom we assigned guests to tables, yet did not account for the fact that some sponsors were bringing their full eight allowed guests to the event and not enough chairs were set for them at the table. The influx of guests became so concerning that an extra table was added at the last minute and many students were asked to give up their seats at their assigned table and moved to the extra one.

As the event continues in years to come, both the positives and the negatives can be kept in mind during the planning process. It is recommended, to continue to survey event attendees each year and evaluate what worked and what did not. This is the only way to really ensure that the event is developing each year. It is suggested not to concentrate on the follow-up survey as much, as it is not going to produce as many responses as the survey at the event. The reason for this being that the researcher does not have the same face-to-face encouragement. Additionally, event attendees seemed more willing to complete the survey when it was already there in front of them in contrast to taking personal time to fill-out the web-based post-event survey. Making the event survey more inclusive would allow for more data to be collected.

In moving forward, I believe for this event to truly accomplish what it is set out to do, which is to be a showcase of the program, fundraiser for initiatives and most importantly a learning experience for interested event planning students, it needs to take a fresh approach each year. Although it is great to keep trademarks such as the name and even The Big Dish plate auction, it is not advised that the same location and set-up is used every year. Trying things such as a sit-down dinner or holding the event at the Union, would keep it fresh and enjoyable for attendees. Additionally, it was mentioned that the 4-H Center was a bit crowded. As one of the

goals should be to grow the event, it would not be advantageous to hold it in a place where space is limited.

There were also several ideas discussed this year that were not able to happen, but should be considered as options for future events. The number one suggestion being that we should display student work at the event. Many of the classes include projects which would be great to display at a booth. This would allow for industry professionals to view the work of students and get a sense of what takes place in the classroom. Originally a slideshow with this information was created to be played on a loop during the event, but at the last minute it was cut due to technical issues.

Some additional suggestions of ideas for next year include a VIP room for sponsors and top students. This would allow for more private, one-on-one interactions, between these employers and students. Also, more student involvement overall would be beneficial for the event. This includes greater focus on students during the program portion of the event by incorporating additional student speakers, possible awards or scholarships to current students and an increase of student leaders to help plan the event.

One further suggestion from the first Big Dish was to display information about what the money from the event is benefiting. A main point of the event was to serve as a fundraiser for the program, yet besides the sponsorship packet, there was little to no information concerning what the funds supported. Having a booth, slideshow or adding information to the presentation about what the money support would help make it come alive for the program's funders.

Despite the few negative comments and the suggestions that were not able to happen, overall the project was a great learning experience in event planning for everyone involved. The event really required a great deal of teamwork and communication and it would not have been

possible without all the donations that were received from various sponsors. In the future, this event is set to become one of the biggest events for the Columbus Hospitality Industry. It is the perfect way to bring the leaders of the industry today and those positioned to be future leaders together in one place.

References

- Arnett, Dennis, German, Steve, & Hunt, Shelby. (2003). The Identity Salience Model of Relationship Marketing Success: The Case of Nonprofit Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 67.2, 89-105. Retrieved February 1, 2012, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040525>
- Ivanović, Slobodan, Galičić, Vlado & Mikinac, Krešimir. (2010). Event Planning As A Function In The Hospitality Industry. *Tourism & Hospitality Management*, 925-930. Retrieved January 25, 2012, from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=20ffb769-cefb-4f0f-9714-3448945d5c24%40sessionmgr12&vid=11&hid=21>
- Paris, Cody, Lee, Woojin, & Seery, Paul. (2010). The Role of Social Media in Promoting Special Events: Acceptance of Facebook 'Events.' *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, 14, 531-4. Retrieved February 1, 2012, from <http://www.springerlink.com/content/lr55p5658u201357/>
- Peltier, James W., & Schibrowsky, John A. (1995). The Direct Marketing of Charitable Causes: A Study of U.S. Fundraisers. *Journal of Direct Marketing*, 9.3, 72-80. Retrieved January 25, 2012, from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=20ffb769-cefb-4f0f-9714-3448945d5c24%40sessionmgr12&vid=4&hid=21>
- Stevick, Thomas R. (2010). Integrating Development, Alumni Relations, and Marketing For Fundraising Success. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 149, 57-64. Retrieved February 1, 2012, from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=20ffb769-cefb-4f0f-9714-3448945d5c24%40sessionmgr12&vid=8&hid=21>

Wilson, John S. (2004). Special Events: Defining Goals, Planning And Measuring Success.

Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances, 17.4, 150-151. Retrieved January 25, 2012

from

http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/pdf.cgi/Wilson_John_S.pdf?issn=0888045x&issue=v17i0004&article=150_sedgpams



You are being invited to participate in a project being conducted by The Big Dish Planning Committee in collaboration with the Hospitality Management Program. The purpose of this study is to gather information from the first Big Dish to be used for the purpose of improving the event in future years.

Your participation is voluntary, but we hope you choose to participate. Also, full completion of the survey is not required. You may choose to answer only the questions which apply to you and which you feel comfortable providing a response to. Please note that your responses are confidential. The name portion of this survey should be torn off and used only for the door prize drawing. There are no foreseeable risks for participating in the study. To help ensure confidentiality please do not write your name anywhere else on the survey.

The results of this study will allow us to provide tips and recommendations for next year's Big Dish event and also support the findings of "What it takes to make a Fundraising event Successful." At no point in the research will an individual subject be identified.

Please direct any questions to Margaret Binkley at mbinkley@ehe.osu.edu or (614) 292-4529 or Kelsey Ring at (740) 236-2211. Any questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be addressed to the Ohio State University Office of Responsible Research Practices (614) 688-8457 for the protection of human subjects.

COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION AND
HUMAN ECOLOGY

Please turn to the back to fill out this survey!

Thank you for joining us. We appreciate all your support and look forward to you joining us again next year!



How Are We Doing?

- ❖ Please rate your overall satisfaction with the event.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○
1 2 3 4 5
Disappointing Exceptional

- ❖ Did the event structure give you ample time to network and enjoy the food stations?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○
1 2 3 4 5
Not at All Completely

- ❖ Please rate the 4-H Center as being a suitable space for the event (i.e. simple to locate, well set-up, and easy to navigate food stations).

○ ○ ○ ○ ○
1 2 3 4 5
Disappointing Exceptional

- ❖ Did the event meet your expectations?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○
1 2 3 4 5
Not at All Completely

- ❖ Are you likely to attend this event next year?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- ❖ Are there any other comments or suggestions for next year's event?

To be eligible for the drawing please tear-off this bottom portion
and return it to the registration desk.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Industry Professional Survey

The disclaimer below will need to be displayed before they take the survey.

You are being invited to participate in a project being conducted by The Big Dish Planning Committee in collaboration with the Hospitality Management Program. The purpose of this study is to gather information from the first Big Dish to be used for the purpose of improving the event in future years. This is the second of two surveys and your participation or nonparticipation in the first survey in no way affects your participation in this survey.

Your participation is voluntary, but we hope you choose to participate. Also, full completion of the survey is not required. You may choose to answer only the questions which apply to you and which you feel comfortable providing a response to. Please note that your responses are confidential. There are no foreseeable risks for participating in the study. To help ensure confidentiality please do not enter your name or email anywhere on the survey.

The results of this study will allow us to provide tips and recommendations for next year's Big Dish event and also support the findings of "What it takes to make a Fundraising event Successful." At no point in the research will an individual subject be identified.

Please direct any questions to Margaret Binkley at mbinkley@ehe.osu.edu or (614) 292-4529 or Kelsey Ring at (740) 236-2211. Any questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be addressed to the Ohio State University Office of Responsible Research Practices (614) 688-8457 for the protection of human subjects.

1. How did you hear about The Big Dish?
 - Email Invitation
 - Print Invitation
 - Friend or Colleague
 - Other
2. Have you attended any events with OSU Hospitality Management Program before, including any past Rising Stars or Networking Events?
 - Yes
 - No
3. After attending The Big Dish, how willing are you to attend future OSU Hospitality Management events?
 - Very Likely
 - Somewhat Likely
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat Unlikely
 - Not at all Likely

4. Did you buy tickets using the online payment system?
 - Yes
 - No
5. If yes, did you find the system convenient to use?
 - Very
 - Somewhat Convenient
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Inconvenient
 - Not at all
6. Did you purchase a sponsorship at The Big Dish?
 - Yes, In kind
 - Yes, Silver
 - Yes, Gold
 - Yes, Platinum
 - No
7. If yes, what would you like to see added to next year's sponsorship packet?
8. Did you feel like the food was substantial enough to count as a full meal?
9. Please feel free to leave any additional suggestions or comments.

Student Survey

The disclaimer below will need to be displayed before they take the survey.

You are being invited to participate in a project being conducted by The Big Dish Planning Committee in collaboration with the Hospitality Management Program. The purpose of this study is to gather information from the first Big Dish to be used for the purpose of improving the event in future years. This is the second of two surveys and your participation or nonparticipation in the first survey in no way affects your participation in this survey.

Your participation is voluntary, but we hope you choose to participate. Also, full completion of the survey is not required. You may choose to answer only the questions which apply to you and which you feel comfortable providing a response to. Please note that your responses are confidential. There are no foreseeable risks for participating in the study. To help ensure confidentiality please do not enter your name or email anywhere else on the survey.

The results of this study will allow us to provide tips and recommendations for next year's Big Dish event and also support the findings of "What it takes to make a Fundraising event Successful." At no point in the research will an individual subject be identified.

Please direct any questions to Margaret Binkley at mbinkley@ehe.osu.edu or (614) 292-4529 or Kelsey Ring at (740) 236-2211. Any questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be addressed to the Ohio State University Office of Responsible Research Practices (614) 688-8457 for the protection of human subjects.

1. Where did you first hear about The Big Dish?
 - Through 650 (Erica)
 - Email Invitation
 - Friend or Other Student
 - Other
2. Have you attended the former Rising Stars?
 - Yes
 - No
3. How willing would you have been to attend the event, if not required to through the 650 class?
 - Very Likely
 - Somewhat Likely
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat Unlikely
 - Not at all Likely
4. How easy was it to locate the 4-H Center on the OSU Campus?
 - Very Easy
 - Somewhat Easy
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Uneasy
 - Not at all easy
5. Did you feel there was adequate time to mingle and network with professionals and faculty, along with other students?
 - Very
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Not at all
6. Was it easy to approach and network with industry professionals?
 - Very Easy
 - Somewhat Easy
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Uneasy

- Not at all easy
7. Were the food stations easy to navigate?
 - Very Easy
 - Somewhat Easy
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Uneasy
 - Not at all easy
 8. Did you feel like the food was substantial enough to count as a full meal?
 - Very
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Not at all
 9. Did you find the pre-printed business cards in your registration envelope to be useful?
 - Very
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Not at all
 10. Which part of the short program did you most enjoy most?
 - Emcee (Angela Pace)
 - College Speaker (Dean Cheryl Achterberg)
 - Student Speaker (Jill Renda)
 - Board Speaker (David Miller)
 11. Do you have suggestion for next year's program?
 12. How willing would you to return to the event as an alumnus of the program?
 - Very Likely
 - Somewhat Likely
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat Unlikely
 - Not at all Likely
 13. Did you attend the Networking Workshop?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, please answer the following questions:

14. Did you find the Networking Workshop to be informational and useful?

- Very
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Somewhat Not
- Not at all
- Did not attend

15. Did you feel more comfortable attending The Big Dish after attending the Networking workshop?

- Very
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Somewhat Not
- Not at all
- Did not attend

16. Did you find that you could apply the tips you learned at the Networking Workshop the night of The Big Dish?

- Very
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Somewhat Not
- Not at all
- Did not attend

17. Do you have any suggestions for the Networking Workshop in the future?

18. Please tell us your favorite part of The Big Dish.

19. Please tell us your least favorite part of The Big Dish.

20. Please feel free to leave any additional suggestions or comments.

Appendix C – General Results

	Students	Faculty/Staff	Industry Professionals	Total
Paying Attendees	5	12	144*	161
Nonpaying Attendees	72	4	52	128
Total				289

*Include professionals who received tickets though purchase of sponsorship.

	Number Sold	Amount Generated
Individual Student Ticket Sales (\$15 each)	5	\$75
Individual Faculty/Staff Ticket Sales (\$25 each)	12	\$300
Individual Industry Professionals Ticket Sales (\$75 each)	24	\$1,800
Total in Individual Tickets		\$2,175
Silver Sponsorship (\$1,000)	10	\$10,000
Gold Sponsorship (\$1,250)	0	\$0
Platinum Sponsorship (1,500)	5	\$7,500
Total in Sponsorships		\$17,500
Plates	9	\$1,190
Raffle Items	408**	\$680
Total in Sold Items		\$1,870
Total Revenue		\$21,545
Total Costs		<\$11,480>

Starting Budget		\$5,000
Total Ending Funds		\$15,065

**Items were combined to make up one larger prize.

Card Survey Results

Question 1: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the event.	
Number of Responses	208
Mean*	4.63

Question 2: Did the event structure give you ample time to network and enjoy the food stations?	
Number of Responses	210
Mean*	4.72

Question 3: Please rate the 4-H Center as being a suitable space for the event (i.e. simple to locate, well set-up, and easy to navigate food stations).	
Number of Responses	210
Mean*	4.64

Question 4: Did the event meet your expectations?	
Number of Responses	210
Mean*	4.7

Question 5: Are you likely to attend this event next year?	
Number of Responses	206
Count of No	9
Count of Yes	197
Percentage of No	4%
Percentage of Yes	96%

*Scale was 1-5, 5 = Exceptional/Completely, 1 = Disappointing/Not at all

Comments & Suggestions

These comments are not all inclusive. Some comments were not included due to their repetitive nature.

- Enjoyed speaking with students, would like to hear them speak more to hear what they are striving for
- I think that there should be more food. Something more substantial
- Perhaps a few more (I know the space is limited...) cocktail tables.
- For students, there was a lot of confusion about 'VIP' students. In the future, I wouldn't give any information until it's definite.
- Better PA system.
- Make it a cash bar after tickets run out. Donate proceeds.
- More silent auction items. Video!?
- Business professionals didn't seem excited to network, so it was kind of awkward.
- Need more room for networking portion of event.
- Close silent auction before presentation so winners can be announced at the end.
- Have Angela Pace next year! Awesome!
- Prefer own parking vs. valet
- Fantastic event! Add a portion educating guests about what students learn.
- It was a very nice and diverse group of people in attendance. Great variety of food vendors.
- Table signs should be larger, easier to read
- The reception space too small, hard to get around, mingle, and too hot! Staff exceptional!
- Have photographer at this event. This is great PR.
- Any more people and you may have to move the event.
- More time for table talk.
- Just 2 more food vendors!
- Better explain that "Food Stations" is dinner and that the reception room is just for the presentation.
- Banquet implies sit down dinner - recommend using different word.
- Very long cocktail hour; more organized table at front for registration.
- Wine at the table.
- Food available during the presentation.
- Perhaps do something for alumni to be a part (I am graduating)?
- Bottleneck with 1st bar in the corner.
- List participating industry professionals for other companies to see who is attending.

Appendix E – Second Survey Results

Industry Professional Survey	
How did you hear about The Big Dish?	
Email Invitation	39%
Print Invitation	4%
Friend or Colleague	39%
Other	18%
Number of Responses	23
Have you attended any events with OSU Hospitality Management Program before, including any past Rising Stars or Networking Events?	
Yes	43%
No	57%
Number of Responses	23
After attending The Big Dish, how willing are you to attend future OSU Hospitality Management events?	
Very Likely	87%
Somewhat Likely	9%
Undecided	40%
Somewhat Unlikely	0%
Not at all Likely	0%
Number of Responses	23
Did you buy your tickets using the online payment system?	
Yes	23%
No	77%
Number of Responses	22
If yes, did you find the system convenient to use?	
Very	63%
Somewhat Convenient	0%
Neutral	37%

Somewhat Inconvenient	0%
Not at all	0%
Number of Responses	8
Did you purchase a sponsorship at The Big Dish?	
Yes, in kind	13%
Yes, Silver	23%
Yes, Gold	9%
Yes, Platinum	23%
No	32%
Number of Responses	22
Did you feel like the food was substantial enough to count as a full meal?	
Very	43%
Somewhat Agree	26%
Neutral	9%
Somewhat Disagree	13%
Not at all	9%
Number of Responses	23

Comments & Suggestions

These comments are not all inclusive. Some comments were not included due to their repetitive nature.

- It would have also been great to have our photo taken with the HMA team and directors of The Big Dish to post on various sites to promote the event afterwards.
- We would have liked more time to interact with the students. Sitting down in the ballroom seemed unnecessary since there was neither food nor drinks. Perhaps there could be a small stage and microphone set up outside of the ballroom for the presentation. Also, it appeared the top students were so busy running the event; they did not have time to interact with recruiters.
- Maybe have an extra time prior to reception for students to network with hotels 30 - 45 minutes?
- I would suggest more of a show case event where graduating students manage the event while undergraduates work the event and show case the students and program. I already know the capabilities and quality of Cameron Mitchel and Barcelona.
- Would like to have more time to visit with students at my table
- Please have photographers at the next event to capture everything.

- It was not made clear that the reception food was the only food that would be available. The "banquet" suggested that there would be additional food.
- The information for the program didn't communicate well that it wasn't a sit down affair nor did the program the evening of the event say it.

Student Survey Results

Where did you first hear about The Big Dish?	
Through 650 (Erica)	75%
Email Invitation	2%
Friend or Other Student	5%
Other	18%
Number of Responses	44

Have you attended the former Rising Stars?	
Yes	9%
No	91%
Number of Response	44

How willing would you have been to attend the event, if not required to through the 650 class?	
Very Likely	19%
Somewhat Likely	40%
Undecided	14%
Somewhat Unlikely	19%
Not at all Likely	9%
Number of Responses	43

How easy was it to locate the 4-H Center on the OSU Campus?	
Very Easy	73%
Somewhat Easy	18%
Neutral	7%
Somewhat Uneasy	2%
Not at all easy	0%
Number of Responses	44

Did you feel there was adequate time to mingle and network with professionals and faculty, along with other students?	
Very	82%
Somewhat Agree	16%
Neutral	2%
Somewhat Disagree	0%
Not at all	0%
Number of Responses	44

Was it easy to approach and network with industry professionals?	
Very Easy	18%
Somewhat Easy	36%
Neutral	20%
Somewhat Uneasy	20%
Not at all easy	5%
Number of Responses	44

Were the food stations easy to navigate?	
Very Easy	39%
Somewhat Easy	32%
Neutral	11%
Somewhat Uneasy	16%
Not at all easy	2%
Number of Responses	44

Did you feel like the food was substantial enough to count as a full meal?	
Very	9%
Somewhat Agree	30%
Neutral	16%
Somewhat Disagree	41%
Not at all	5%
Number of Responses	44

Did you find the pre-printed business cards in your registration envelope to be useful?	
Very	50%
Somewhat Agree	32%

Neutral	11%
Somewhat Disagree	0%
Not at all	7%
Number of Responses	44

Which part of the short program did you most enjoy most?	
Emcee (Angela Pace)	70%
College Speaker (Dean Cheryl Achterberg)	5%
Student Speaker (Jill Renda)	9%
Board Speaker (David Miller)	16%
Number of Responses	44

How willing would you to return to the event as an alumnus of the program?	
Very Likely	26%
Somewhat Likely	60%
Undecided	12%
Somewhat Unlikely	2%
Not at all Likely	0%
Number of Responses: 43	43

Did you attend the Networking Workshop?	
Number of Yes	12
Percentage of Yes	28%
Number of No	31
Percentage of No	72%
Number of Responses	43

Did you find the Networking Workshop to be informational and useful?	
Very	50%
Somewhat	42%
Neutral	0%
Somewhat Not	0%
Not at all	8%
Number of Responses	12

Did you feel more comfortable attending The Big Dish after attending the Networking workshop?	
Very	31%
Somewhat	46%
Neutral	8%
Somewhat Not	15%
Not at all	0%
Number of Responses: 43	13

Did you find that you could apply the tips you learned at the Networking Workshop the night of The Big Dish?	
Very	42%
Somewhat	42%
Neutral	8%
Somewhat Not	8%
Not at all	0%
Number of Responses	12

Comments & Suggestions

These comments are not all inclusive. Some comments were not included due to their repetitive nature.

- One of the things I didn't like though was how crowded it was in the area that we were all networking.
- Would be to get future information on networking officials that will be sitting at your table, that information would be great in showing the industry professionals that we have done our research and we are interested in their company.
- I think that we can make a few other changes allowing the people that donate their food and time and energy the time to network. AKA the people that are cooking for us, I didn't get to network with them at all.
- I thought that the speaker portion would have been a little longer and include more information about how to get involved with HMA and other things around campus for Hospitality students and also for the professionals.
- I think that the space was too small for the number of people. I also believe that the rounds were misleading to people who thought that maybe there would be a sit down meal.
- Maybe instead of food stations have a meal during the presentation. It was weird to sit at a huge table with nothing to do when there was a break in conversation.

- I think the desserts could have been at the tables. It was different to sit down in banquet style and not be served a meal/food.
- I believe it should be required students get at least one business card because a lot of them grouped together and didn't speak to others.
- More students at registration and more lenient seating arrangements. Paper tickets should also be required.
- Food should be in the same room as the presentation so that people can bring food to their table.
- I think a little more guidance beforehand. Making the info session mandatory or part of a class lecture may help.
- Have a photographer
- It was a great idea to seat students with industry professionals, especially because they tried to seat students with companies in our field of interest.
- I enjoyed the array of industry professionals. I feel that the students did a great job at attracting such high clientele in the local hospitality industry.
- I thought the silent auction plates looked VERY cheap. I could tell someone used permanent marker and put the logo on them. However, the famous folks that signed them were great!
- The center pieces for where you had to sit could have been easier to read/ also marked by table numbers.
- If there could have been more information about what the event was benefitting -- for example, the study abroad or interactive classroom -- would have been great to go into more detail.
- The raffle itself was very confusing in that there were prizes listed that weren't given away, or prizes were combined differently than listed. Someone told me you could pick out of three prizes if your ticket was pulled, but that wasn't the case either. So, I think clarity and consistency across issues like this would have been helpful.
- Loved that the valet parking was free!

Appendix F – Event Timeline

Pre-Planning Considerations

- What are the goals of the event?
- Are you using a theme for the event? If so, what are some ideas?
- Who is your target audience?
- What sort of space do you need?
- When will the event be held?
- How long will the event last?
- Other considerations
 - What is the budget?
 - Are there limitations on what can be done as far as time, resources, or people?

6-8 Months Ahead

- Consider and answer all pre-planning questions.
- Establish a committee and begin discussing positions.
 - Recruit students to committee, preferably junior or senior level students who are interested in event planning.
 - Enroll them in course for credit.
 - Gather their areas of interest in order to assign positions.
 - Establish expectations and projected time commitment.
- Book venue and the Master of the Ceremony.
- Begin making lists for possible donors and attendees.
- Prepare save the dates cards/emails for the event (requires a date, time, place and draft of invite list).
- Analyze budget and make preliminary decisions on allocation of budget to different parts.
- Establish ticket prices for each group of attendees and establish sponsorship levels.
 - Decide what each sponsorship level will receive for their donations.

4-5 Months Ahead

- Set up meeting time for committee to begin working.
 - Can be just students and assigned professor in beginning with industry partners incorporated based on topic.
 - Set topics for each meeting to discuss and send out information ahead of time for committee to begin brainstorming.
- Begin asking for donations of items (food, silent auction, sponsorships, etc).
 - Start with previous donors.
 - Ask for suggestions from board members.

- Ensure for food items a variety of items are being donated (i.e. appetizers, entrees, desserts).
- Make preliminary timeline for the event.
- Establish what classes will help with the actual event night.
 - Send out information for these students to reserve the date.
 - Give them more information on the goals of the event and create excitement among the student body.
- Consider give-away for the event and begin making price checks on items (Pot holders were used for inaugural event, suggestions for future events included small plate with The Big Dish logo, glasses or mugs, etc.).
- Send out Save the Date cards.

2-3 Months Ahead

- Design, print and begin sending out invitations.
- Establish final invitee list.
- Gather commitments from donors.
- Brainstorm space and layout of venue for event.
- Make detailed list of all needed event items (i.e. tables, place settings, decorations, etc.).
 - Ask donors for these items.
 - Place erequests for items that will need to be bought or rented.
- Set-up website for purchasing tickets.
- Start advertisements on social media.
- Establish what sort of program will be presented and provide speakers with talking points.
 - Make detailed timeline.
- Reconfirm venue.
- Decide on any information that will be included in registration packets (i.e. drink tickets, handbills, student business cards, etc.) and begin designing each for printing.

1-1 ½ Months Ahead

- Make sure all invitations are sent out.
- Encourage students and board members to buy their tickets and have them encourage their colleagues to do the same.
- Start making guest list from those who have purchased individual tickets or sponsorships.
- Gather donations from donors and provide donors who will be present at the event (i.e. food vendors) with further information.
- Start making event program, being sure to include sponsor level recognition.
- Have student committee begin speaking in classes to explain the event and what it means for the hospitality program.

- Design and print any necessary signage.
- Decide on and order or let students know what their uniform for the event will include.

2-3 Weeks Ahead

- Finalize guest list.
- Begin putting together registration envelopes and printing final materials (i.e. nametags, handbill, etc.).
- Assign day of duties to all committee members and divide student works among them as needed.
- Start training with students who will be working the event.
- Finalize timeline of the event.
- Finalize event program and begin printing.
- Make name tags for all of those working/helping with the event.

Final Week

- Gather all materials for decorations.
- Decide on table layouts and finalize diagram for set-up.
- Confirm with all those helping/speaking at the event to ensure commitment and answer last minute questions.
- Finish registration envelopes.
- Make seating chart (if necessary).

Appendix G – Suggested Committee Breakdown

Committee roles can be divided or combined depending on the number of people serving on the committees and their interests. Ideally there will be more than one person working on each of the suggested categories below. It is recommended that each committee with three or more people also have an appointed chair.

Fundraising

- Design and put together sponsorship packet.
- Ask donors for contributions to auction/raffle and for sponsorships.
- Connect with board members to encourage their help with requesting donations.
- Track all donations and sponsorship levels.
- Gather logos from each sponsor to display in event program.
- Arrange sponsorship gifts and recognition based on donation level.
- Plan and set-up auction/raffle.
- Track money made from all outlets:
 - Sponsorships
 - Auction/raffle
 - Tickets
 - Other donations

Food & Beverage

- Decide on what type of food and drink will be available and how it will be presented (i.e. food stations, sit down dinner, buffet, etc.).
- Ask for donations from vendors and local restaurants.
- Track all donations and ensure commitments.
- Provide donors with all needed information on participation during the actual event.
- Work with assigned student workers to provide training materials and needed coaching to work with vendors and help with serving night of.
- Complete any necessary paper work for serving alcohol at a university event.

Public Relations & Advertisement

- Create guest list using past lists and suggestions from the board.
- Use social media, such as Facebook page, to inform people of the event.
- Arrange student speakers in classes to talk about the event.
- Create and design Save the Date and Invitations.
- Maintain list of guests who have purchased tickets and anyone receiving a complimentary ticket.

- Put together information for registration table (i.e. name badges, drink tickets, handbill, etc.).
- Decide on giveaway for all guests and order accordingly.
- Set-up and run registration table.

Event Set-up & Décor

- Work with coordinator to finalize event location and write contract for renting space.
- Establish cohesive theme or colors for the event to follow.
- Write timeline for the event.
- Create layout for how venue will be set-up.
- Arrange for decorations and needed items for the event (i.e. tables, center pieces, etc).
- Work with students to provide training materials and coaching on what will happen during set-up.
- Run set-up the day of the event.

Presentation & Program Display

- Develop and decide on what type of presentation will be given during the program (i.e. what it will focus on, will there be awards, etc.).
- Invite and confirm speakers.
- Provide talking points to all speakers in order to create a cohesive program.
- Write timeline for the presentation.
- Put together any media that will be ran during the program.
- Run presentation during the event.
- Decide on and arrange necessary components for displaying what the Hospitality Management Program is about (i.e. booth containing student projects, slideshow of information, student ambassadors who talk about program with guests, etc.)
- Design and print event program, coordinating with fundraising team to include sponsor recognition.

Appendix H – Event Planning and Execution Issues

Communication

As with any large group or team, communication can become a major issue. Since there are so many different ideas being given and different opinions to consider often it becomes difficult to really communicate with the entire group. Add on top of that the fact that different schedules have to be accommodated and different topics include different people and it can become quite difficult.

The committee had several ways in which communication was maintained. The first was a weekly conference call on Friday mornings that included all of The Big Dish planning committee members. Beyond that email chains, individual phone calls and even texting were used as ways of communicating. Since everyone operated on such varying schedules, meetings beyond the weekly Friday morning meeting were hard to confirm. Often at least one person was unable to attend, so detailed notes were taken and the person who was unable to attend a meeting was expected to catch up by referring to the notes.

Leigh Anthony from Demand Media wrote an article called “Effective Communication in a Team.” The article addressed very basic team problems and suggestions for how to address them. These suggestions include but were not limited to rules, member roles and leader roles. Rules for the team include very basic things such as when communication should take place and which type of medium should be used to communicate. For example, The Big Dish may have a rule that everyone is expected to copy all committee members on an email even if it doesn’t directly pertain to them. Member roles refer to the way each team member will conduct themselves in group meetings. As for leadership roles this means that whoever is designated as

the leader of that particular meeting should make sure to keep the group on topic and serve as mediator should any issues arrive (Anthony, 2012).

Applying each of these suggestions in The Big Dish planning committee can be easily done and can hopefully facilitate better communication. One example for rules was already given, but another might be for each planning committee member to check their email at least once a day in order to reply to any necessary emails. This rule will ensure that each team member is staying on task and keeping up with the flow of information. This also guarantees that the person presenting the question or problem will have an answer within at least a day or two of emailing the committee.

As for member roles, this aspect is really about granting respect to each member of the team (i.e. not interrupting one another, not being judgmental of others ideas, etc.). Although, this was not an issue this year, it is important to still keep this in mind in future years. The leadership role aspect is one that The Big Dish committee, I believe could certainly work on in the future. It is important that someone is identified at the start of each meeting as the team leader. It does not always need to be the same person each time. If the meeting has an agenda that is focused on a certain topic, for example the silent auction, then the person who is running the silent auction might be the best person to serve as the leader for that meeting.

The most important part is that this person is identified in the beginning as the leader and is willing to take on the responsibility. Again, this really concerns making sure the meeting moves forward without straying too far from the topic at hand and mediating any issues that arise. This leader should also be the person to ensure that everyone else is able to have their turn to speak and that someone is assigned to take notes.

Another important aspect of facilitating communication within a team such as The Big Dish committee is to make sure everyone is aware of their responsibilities. Often lines get blurred when you have a small committee working on one large project. It is perfectly fine and natural if someone works on a task that is not technically “their assignment.” However, it is important from the beginning to establish who is responsible for what and to put those responsibilities and assignments in writing. Then if someone has a question about that aspect of the event or an issue arises then the person listed as having the responsibility should be the one to address it. This eliminates the communication problem of issues being bounced around from person to person, or a task falling through the cracks.

Once each person has set responsibilities then communication on a certain topic can be narrowed down to who it affects. Although as I indicated earlier it is good to keep everyone in the loop (i.e. with meeting notes and by being copied on emails), not everyone necessarily needs to be part of the decision process for every aspect. This can assist the communication process as it narrows down who needs to be contacted for decisions, and can make it easier to schedule face to face meetings. As long as these small committees ensure that all group members are informed of decisions, changes, or other information, this can be a great way to facilitate communication.

To give an example of this, if it needs to be decided which restaurants will be asked for donations, it does not necessarily require the input of the entire committee. Although, anyone can give suggestions, the decision of who should be asked should be left up to those working on sponsorships, operations and/or those who will be doing the requesting. This information can then be relayed to the entire committee once the decision has been made.

Requesting Donations

An event designed to serve as a fundraiser or one which has a limited budget can present an added concern. Requesting donations both for in-kind items and for sponsorships can be a tricky ordeal. Since The Big Dish is both a fundraising event and has a limited budget, asking for donations was a very significant part of making the event a success. The committee asked for a variety of in-kind items including, 300 small plates for a dinner station, bar service, valet service, flower centerpieces and table linens. Additionally The Big Dish sold sponsorships to companies beginning at one-thousand dollars.

Although the committee did a relatively great job obtaining donations in several forms, there is still much room for improvement. The goal for obtaining donations should be somewhat easier in the next years, as the event gains recognition. Part of the problem this year was lack of awareness about the event and the Hospitality Management Program in general. An article discussing the “Five Reasons for Fundraising Failures” stated, “In order for people to participate financially in a fundraiser, they need to understand what it is the organization does and why it is important. Too many fundraising events never reach their full potential because the organization fails to convince the donor of the importance of the mission, or worse yet never even bothers to explain the mission at all” (Westbrook, 2012). One way we prevented the issue this year was to develop a sponsorship packet. The sponsorship packet highlighted information about the event, the program, what the money was supporting and how to make a contribution. This packet was a very important part of being able to request donations and ensuring legitimacy of the program and the event. It should be edited for next year.

An article on dosomething.org titled, “Action Tips: getting in-kind donations” provided some helpful tips that the committee can apply when requesting donations next year. The article

highlights general tips such as brainstorming to figure out all needed items, making sure to provide a formal letter of request, and offering something in return for the donation (www.dosomething.org). The article also suggests some tips that would help improve on gathering donations.

One of those suggestions is to be explicitly clear with what you are asking for (www.dosomething.org). By having clear communication on exactly what you need and when you need it, you will avoid those last minute issues of something not getting delivered or picked-up or it being the wrong item. To give an example of this with The Big Dish, two days before the event the valet service called wanting to know how many people we were expecting, at what time and how they were being paid. These were all things that should have been communicated a great deal prior to the event. If the committee had remained in better contact with the valet service and communicated all the details ahead of time then this issue could have been avoided.

Keeping notes on all contacts was another suggestion given by the article (www.dosomething.org). This was something that the committee seriously lacked. One of the reasons this became so difficult goes back to the same reason we addressed in the communication section. The issue was that the committee did not have clearly set responsibilities for each person and therefore, there were often multiple people in contact with the same company. If the committee would allocate just one maybe two people to be in contact with a company to ask for donations and clear notes were taken and saved so that everyone could refer to them then this process could be improved.

Another issue with requesting donations is that it is often hard to determine who to ask. This goes for what company to ask and even who within in the company the request should be directed towards. One way to address this issue is to look for networks. This year the committee

relied heavily on the networks of the Hospitality Management Advisory Board and others that were closely tied to The Ohio State University and the Hospitality Management program.

Although this is a great place to start, the best thing to do is to expand the network of people to ask as the event continues into the future. If careful notes are recorded on contacts, as was just suggested, then these can be referenced to in the following years.

Also, even if a company says no to a donation the first time, it is still important to document that occurrence. Companies may say no for a variety of reasons. They may simply not have the time that year it does not necessarily mean that they will never support the event in future years. If these contacts are kept and the information documented then they can prove useful in the future.

Ultimately the best way to overcome the issue of requesting donations is to do the obvious, ask! Sometimes it is just a matter of taking the initial steps to make contact with the company and tell them about the event and ask them for exactly what is needed. When contact with a company is initiated, it is important to tell them how their donation will not only benefit the event, but how it will benefit them as well. Talking to them about what will be offered in return (i.e. signage at the event, a special thank you in the program) will allow them to see the benefit in giving the donation. Anything you can ask for realistically to be donated, should be asked for including food, decorations, raffle items, and even plates and cutlery.

Guest List & Registration

Although target market is often a word associated with the business world and companies with products to sell, it is a term that can also be applied to planning events. With an event such as The Big Dish, it is important to define a target market and work hard to market to those

companies and guests. Creating a guest list for the event was such an essential step and to do it the committee really needed to define the target market.

Since, the event was about bringing together the hospitality industry and supporting the program it was not as much of an issue to define our market as the Hospitality Industry, both students and professionals. For some events, making this initial decision of who the target market is can be difficult. From there we defined it as an even smaller niche market of the Columbus area Hospitality Industry which had some ties to The Ohio State University. By ties to the university, it really meant students of our program and professionals who had been involved in the college or university in some way. This included alumni, those who had attended past program events, companies in which program students had interned and even those professionals which had ties with our Advisory Board members.

The reason for creating this smaller niche market was due to same reason that all companies and industries take the time to define their market, “No one can afford to target everyone (Porta, 2012).” The cost and time to print and send invitations was quite high, and it only made sense to narrow the market to those the committee decided were likely to attend. The process of creating the guest list started by taking the names from past guest lists and combining them into one. This created a list that was much larger than planned. The issue then became how to eliminate people and also how to check if these people were still with the companies listed.

To deal with this issue the committee spent a lot of time cross-referencing names to companies and also comparing it to lists of participants from other events. Once this was completed, the board also added a few names to the invited guest list and the list of the targeted niche market was complete. It was important for the committee to keep in mind however, that

even though these were the people and companies being targeted for the event, “Targeting a specific market does not mean that you have to exclude people that do not fit your criteria (Porta, 2012.)” For example, although the law firm of Wiles, Boyle, Burkholder and Bringardener did not fit our niche market for the event, the committee was still glad to have them as attendees! Anyone should be welcomed to the event, but in order to keep costs at a minimal amount for the invitations and marketing, the niche market is who should be focused on.

Once the issue of creating a guest list was overcome, the next concern was the reservation system. Since there were several ways to obtain tickets this ended up becoming a somewhat confusing process, especially on the committee’s end with trying to create a full list of attendees. Guests could obtain tickets through the purchase of a sponsorship, by purchasing individual tickets via the online reservation system, or through one of the complimentary programs set-up by the committee. Since not all of the options required entering all the names of attendees into one central system (for example: sponsors were simply allowed eight tickets to be given to anyone in their company) there was no full record of everyone attending the event. This led to many of the other issues in the event, such as the registration table being overwhelmed, which will be discussed below.

In order to deal with the issue, the committee in future years may want to consider using a “central reservation system (CSR).” Although the term CRS is usually equated with hotel and airline bookings, this concept can also be applied to events. The committee had already developed an online reservation system which provided the convenience of being “quick and easy (Johnson, 2012).” Yet, if we expand this to make everyone use this reservation system to add in names of their guests, then things can be centralized into one place. This will eliminate the issue of names being submitted in different places and to more than one person.

Other Concerns & Suggestions

In this section some of the concerns brought up repeatedly on the surveys and observed by the committee will be addressed. These are all problems that are smaller and specific to The Big Dish, and many of them were unforeseeable prior to the event. Suggestions were developed by the committee, but do not include all possible solutions. They should only be used as a starting point for next year's event.

1. Registration table too overwhelmed/disorganized.

- Have more student workers to help with the process.
- Mix student and professional lines and divide all alphabetically.
- Clearly label lines to display which line guests should stand in.
- Don't have a seating chart. This will eliminate the concern of trying to seat people with the correct sponsor and having to move others.
- Have a worker to usher/encourage guests to move away from the registration table as soon as they receive their information. This will eliminate some of the congestion.
- Have paper tickets which indicate the company name they registered with.

2. Lobby too crowded for networking and enjoying food stations.

- Consider bigger event space.
- Open ballroom/seating space so people have the option to sit.
- Use less high top tables and add benches/seats along the edges of space for people to sit.

3. Not enough food and/or guests thought there would be full dinner during program

- Clearly state on the invitation that food stations are dinner. Consider rewording or adding a line to explain food stations.
- Add more food stations to the event.

- Consider not doing food stations and having full, sit-down dinner.
 - Butler more of the items so that guests do not have to move around as much to try the different types of food offered.
4. Very little to no information about what students learn in the program and what money is supporting.
 - Have booths that explain all of the program initiatives and display student work.
 - Have printed material including this information for guests to read.
 - Include more information during program portion.
 5. Program hard to hear/sound system cracking.
 - Test system before event and make sure system is working properly.
 - Have all program speakers try speaking into microphone, so they know how close or how far to stand away from it.
 6. No recognition of program alumni.
 - Start program for alumni. Can include special recognition at the event, discounted tickets, or other benefits.
 7. No photographer for event to take pictures for future marketing.
 - Pay professional photographer or ask a photographer for a donation to come to the event to take photos.
 - Assign student to take photos during the event.
 8. Student workers unsure of their responsibilities.
 - Dedicate a full class time to talk about event and break down into groups to discuss the roles within each station. Will need involvement of the committee for this to work.
 - Write out more individualized instructions for each station and distribute before event.

- Ask students to arrive earlier to have a more comprehensive pre-shift meeting.

References

DoSomething.org. Action Tips: getting in-kind donations. Retrieved May 11, 2012, from

<http://www.dosomething.org/u/tips/tips-getting-kind-donations>

Anthony, Leigh. (2012). Chron.com. Effective Communication in a Team. Retrieved May 9,

2012, from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/effective-communication-team-3178.html>

Johnson, Walter. (2012). eHow. The Advantages of Online Reservation. Retrieved May 12,

2012, from http://www.ehow.com/list_6048257_advantages-online-reservation.html

Porta, Mandy. (2012). Inc. How to Define Your Target Market. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from

<http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/06/defining-your-target-market.htm>

Westbrook, David. (2012). Streetdictionary.com. Five Reasons for Fundraising Failures.

Retrieved May 11, 2012, from

http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel_guide/163165/money_management/five_reasons_for_fundraising_failures.html